

Nanticoke Creekwatchers' volunteer training and kickoff event through Reclaim Our River Program set for March 12

DOVER – The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance (NWA) seeks enthusiastic, energetic volunteers to join the 2016 Nanticoke Creekwatchers Citizen Water Monitoring Program, which is set to launch its ninth season with a volunteer training and kickoff event Saturday, March 12 at Trap Pond State Park's Baldcypress Nature Center in Laurel. This year's kickoff will be held as part of the Reclaim Our River Program, which is cosponsored by DNREC and the Division of Watershed Stewardship to provide opportunities for Delawareans to learn about water quality and techniques that can be used to improve it.

Creekwatchers must attend the season kickoff for training or go to an alternate training session Sunday, March 20 at the NWA office in Vienna, Md. Training will provide an in-depth look at the program's water quality monitoring protocol and an opportunity for hands-on experience with water quality monitoring equipment. Further, the training offers insight into the Creekwatchers program and its history, water quality issues and indicators. Since the inception of the program, more than 90 citizen scientists have participated, acting as the eyes and ears of the Nanticoke River and its connected waterways. No previous experience in water quality monitoring is required to become a Creekwatcher.

Every other week from late March through early November, Nanticoke Creekwatchers visit their adopted sites, make observations about sites and weather conditions, take

measurements such as water clarity and dissolved oxygen, and obtain three water samples, which they deliver to designated drop-off locations. Samples are processed by Envirocorp Labs Inc. and Horn Point Lab. Envirocorp is a key program partner and provides \$70,000 in free lab analyses each year.

Other 2016 program partners include DNREC, the Chesapeake Bay Trust, the University of Maryland's Center for Environmental Science's Integration and Application Network, Town Creek Foundation, Salisbury University's Bacterial Source Tracking Lab, Dorchester Citizens for Planned Growth, Delaware Technical Community College, RSVP Lower Shore and Delaware 50+. The NWA provides training, all water monitoring equipment and ongoing support for volunteers.

Data collected by Nanticoke Creekwatchers is used to produce an annual report card that details the health of the river and its tributaries and examines steps residents can take to reduce pollution. The 2015 Nanticoke River Report Card will be released in July 2016 at the annual Nanticoke River Wade-In. In addition, Creekwatchers data helps the NWA pinpoint water quality issues and informs outreach and restoration activities.

Interested volunteers may register for Nanticoke Creekwatchers training at creekwatchers2016.eventbrite.com. For more information, contact Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator Beth Wasden at bethwasden@nanticokeriver.org or call 443-944-1175.

*The **Nanticoke Watershed Alliance** is a consensus-building organization that works through partnerships to conserve the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the Nanticoke River Watershed. Partnership representation includes academia, industry, agriculture, development professionals, conservation groups, government and more.*

*The **Reclaim Our River – Nanticoke Series** is devoted to bringing monthly events, workshops and recreational activities*

to the Nanticoke River Watershed. The series offers participants fun opportunities to connect with Delaware's waterways and provides important information on water quality that can help in protecting aquatic resources.

Media Contact: Phil Miller, DNREC Watershed Assessment and Management Section, 302-739-9939, philip.miller@delaware.gov

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